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Mr. Donovan read the first part of a paper "on the supposed identity of the agent in the phenomena of ordinary electricity, voltaic electricity, electro-magnetism, magneto-electricity, and thermo-electricity." This part was introductory to the subject of the remaining portions, which will be devoted to an attempt to prove that the hypothesis at present accredited by philosophers, as adequate to explain the phenomena of the electric fluid, under its various aspects, does not accord with well-observed facts.

Its object was to render it probable that what is called the electric fluid, is not a simple element, as it is generally believed to be, but that it consists of several constituent elements, each exercising a separate function; and many facts were referred to in support of the opinion. Reasons were assigned for believing that this hypothesis is more consonant with the general analogy of nature, than the supposition that electricity is a homogeneous fluid. References were also given to the opinions of those who coincide in this view.

After a full consideration of the facts and arguments, Mr. Donovan summed up as his conclusion, that the electric fluid, in the comprehensive sense of the word, including frictional, voltaic, electro-magnetic, magneto-electric, and thermo-electric, does not consist of one homogeneous element, but of several, viz., heat, light, magnetism, electricity proper, chemical attraction, the physiological agent, and the deflecting agent: that the difference between the various exhibitions of it just mentioned depends on the proportions or energy of the constituent elements, or the influence of the modifications which, under different circumstances, they are capable of exerting on each other. This influence is probably of the same character as that which the forces of nature exercise on each other, on the great scale of creation, controlling, antagonizing, and modifying each other's effects, thus producing the diversified phenomena of the universe, but rarely acting independently.

Considerations were then adduced, with a view of rendering it probable that the electric fluid is matter in some extraordinary state of constitution. If it be matter, its constituents are probably endowed with chemical attraction, a property of which no known kind of matter is destitute: a kind of chemical combination of all the constituent elements would be the result. The affinity of the elements would keep them together, and this would explain the ready passage of *all* the constituents through conductors; one constituent, namely the "electricity proper," conveying the other constituents, some of which may not possess the same ready conductibility. Thus the electric fluid, either in its state of frictional, voltaic, or any other electricity, ought to pass with its known facility through the same bodies, and be intercepted by the same bodies, and so we find it.

In assuming that chemical affinity is thus transported to a distance, Mr. Donovan stated, that there is no innovation on opinions at present entertained by philosophers; and he referred to statements by Sir H. Davy, Faraday, Berzelius, Ampere, Schoënbein, and others, in support of that statement. That a distinct constituent element, possessing chemical powers, should exist in the compound called the electric fluid, associated with heat, prismatic rays, and magnetism, is neither less intelligible nor more improbable than that the very same elements should be found associated in the sun's rays. With regard to the existence of magnetism in the sun's rays, the author conceived that such a number of witnesses as Morichini, Carpi, Rodolfi, Davy, Playfair, Somerville, Baumgartner, and the Messrs. Knox, could not all have been deceived.

Admitting the agents in common and voltaic electricity to be compounds of certain constituent elements, the same in number and nature, but very different in proportions, or perhaps differently combined, they may be considered as fluids perfectly different; in the same way as chemists pronounce bodies composed of common matter to be different, when the constituents are similarly circumstanced.

The paper (first part) thus concluded: "Aware that the identity of the agent, in all the phenomena called electric, is firmly established in the minds of the scientific, and that experiments of apparently so convincing a nature have been brought to bear upon the subject, that doubts seem to be no longer entertained, I scarcely know how to declare, in terms that shall protect me from the imputation of presumption, that I have never been able to view the matter in the same light. I have long hesitated to repeat, in advanced life, an opinion which, in my early days, I ventured to promulgate within the walls of this house, namely, that the agents in electricity and galvanism are different, and that the laws of one do not explain the phenomena of the other. Believing, however, that useful results have often sprung from humble causes; that moral cowardice is as little to be esteemed as moral rashness; that the influence of public opinion ought to have its limits in promoting and restraining human actions; I determined to bring my reasons for dissenting from the views of the philosophical world before a tribunal so competent to judge of their pretensions."

The Rev. J. H. Todd, D. D., gave an account of a fragment of an ancient purple manuscript of the Gospels, in Latin, which he supposes to have been written in the fourth, or early in the fifth century, and which he had purchased some years ago in Dublin.

The fragment is but a single leaf, containing a portion of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. It is written in double columns. Each column begins with a large capital letter, although in the middle of a sentence, or even (as in the case of the third and fourth columns) in the middle of a word. Capital letters are also used at the beginning of sections, which, however, do not always coincide with the ancient Ammonian sections, or *κεφαλαια*, employed in the Eusebian canons; nor are